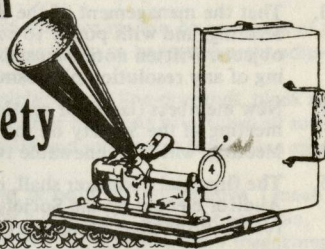
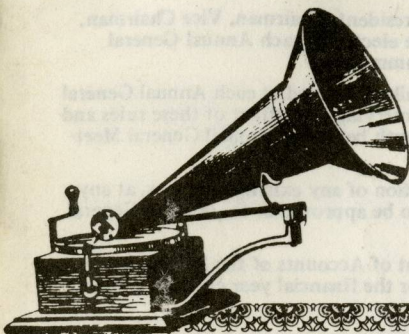


The Hillandale News

The official journal of
The City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society
Inaugurated 1919



NO. 105

DECEMBER 1978



SOCIETY RULES

1. That the Society shall be called THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY, and that its objects shall be the social intercourse of its members, as well as the scientific and musical study of sound reproducing apparatus, as well as its application.
2. That the Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Vice President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Financial Treasurer and Meetings Secretary, who shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting in October, and who shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.
3. That the management of the Society be vested in a Committee, similarly elected at each Annual General Meeting, and with power to co-opt, and that its duties shall be the carrying into effect of these rules and objects. Written notice must be given to the Secretary one clear month before an Annual General Meeting of any resolution proposing to amend these rules.
4. New members (ladies or gentlemen) may be elected on the nomination of any existing member, at any meeting of the Society on the payment of an annual subscription to be approved at the Annual General Meeting, which is renewable twelve calendar months thereafter.
5. The financial Treasurer shall, once in every year, submit a statement of Accounts of the Society to an Auditor elected by the Society and shall furnish a Balance Sheet for the financial year ending October for the inspection of members at each Annual General Meeting.

President: George Frow, [REDACTED] Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3SH
Vice-Presidents: James F. Dennis, R.C.S., [REDACTED] Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 1TW
A.D. Besford, [REDACTED] Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.
Chairman / Editor: Christopher Proudfoot, [REDACTED] Meopham, Gravesend, Kent.
Hon. Treasurer: B.A. Williamson, [REDACTED] Liverpool, L16 1LA.
Hon. Secretary: John McKeown, [REDACTED] St. James's, London, SW1 Y 6PZ.
Archivist: John Carreck, [REDACTED] Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5DX.
Hon. Members: Ernie Bayly, Dennis Harbur, George Frow, Len Watts.
Committee: B. Raynaud, F. Andrews, Dave Roberts, Len Watts.
Publisher: Bill Brott, [REDACTED] West Finchley, London N3 1PG.

TREASURER'S NOTES: In future, would members please send all monies in Sterling (cheques, Postal Orders, etc.) direct to the Treasurer, *together with all orders for goods*, as this will simplify our accounting system, and avoid double handling.

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

U.K. & Europe	£4.00 per year	U.S.A. & Canada	\$8.00 Surface Mail
New Zealand Airmail	£5.00 per year		\$10.00 Airmail
Australia, Japan, etc. (now payable directly to the Treasurer, as bulk subscription has ceased)	£5.00 per year		

Overseas members are requested to send STERLING DRAFTS or banknotes, as check clearances here carry a high commission rate. The Society no longer operates within the Post Office Giro system. New Zealand and Australian Postal Orders are acceptable in the U.K. To save postage in mailing receipts, these are sent out with the goods or next magazine to members. PLEASE MAKE OUT ALL CHECKS AND DRAFTS PAYABLE TO "THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY".

HEREFORD. Details from the Secretary, D.G. Watson, [REDACTED] Tupsley, Hereford.

MIDLANDS. Details from the Secretary, P. Bennett, [REDACTED] Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV4 5DE. Phone: [REDACTED]

MANCHESTER. Details from the Secretary, Ernest Wild, [REDACTED] Uppermill, Oldham OL3 6EB

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA. Details from C. Gracie, [REDACTED] Cavendish, Victoria 3408, Australia.

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that all money should now be sent to our Treasurer, B.A. Williamson, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], Liverpool, L16 1LA.

Chairman's Chat

This issue finds me contributing, for the first time, more than just a 'chat' column to the magazine, for I have taken upon myself the task of literary editor. Bill Brott remains responsible for publishing and layout, but it seemed to me that handwritten articles should be typed before being sent to the printer; to this end, I offered to do some typing, and somehow this escalated into helping out with the editing in general. Our aim is to achieve a more consistent quality in our articles, by ironing out some of the cruder grammatical and syntactical idiosyncrasies and perhaps adding extra information where appropriate as well as trying to correct historical inaccuracies if we happen to notice them.

After coping with my first batch of submissions, I would like to make one or two suggestions, following on from George Frow's comments in the last issue.

Firstly, please type if you possibly can. Double spacing is helpful, and a decent margin on each side of the page essential. Apart from making my task a great deal easier, a typescript is likely to be less severely edited, since the more I 'blue pencil' a manuscript, the less there is left for me to type!

Secondly, try and provide an illustration or two to accompany an article; simple line-drawings, black and white photographs and even good photostats of old line engravings (but not of half-tone prints) are all suitable, and a picture does help to enliven the magazine by breaking up a solid and sometimes forbidding mass of text.

To be interesting, articles should be either entertaining or informative, or both. By informative, I mean that they should provide information that is not already readily available; a historical piece, for example, should show the fruits of original research in primary sources (Patent Office files, contemporary magazines and advertisements for example). There is no point in repeating what has already been said by Messrs. Chew, Read & Welch and Gellatt in a magazine aimed at collectors who are for the most part familiar with these authors already. Having said all that, I would hate to discourage anyone from putting pen to paper, and if you think you have something to contribute, then please go ahead and contribute it! **PLEASE SEND ALL ARTICLES TO CHRISTOPHER PROUDFOOT, [REDACTED] MEOPHAM, GRAVESEND, KENT.**

Some time back I appealed for information on the Tropical Decca. I now know, thanks to our member Howard Hope, that the correct motor for this is a 'Hall' Mark, made by G.C.L. I do not know the full name of the company (G.C.L. usually stands for Gramophone Company Limited, but clearly not in this case). The title 'The "Hall" Mark' appears punningly under a picture of the Royal Albert Hall (shades of Eclipse records' orchestra, the Albert Hall Orchestra, conducted by Albert Hall). It is a double-spring motor of all-steel construction and very similar in appearance to the Paillard motors fitted to most other Deccas. Has anyone such a motor spare? Or can anyone tell me who G.C.L. were, and where they operated from?

Points from the Annual General Meeting

Following the death of Goodwin Ive, spares distribution has been taken over by Barry Williamson. Assistance is being given by his wife, and a vote of thanks to Mrs. Williamson was passed.

Membership over the last year has increased from 532 to 620, but in spite of this the subscriptions are now inadequate to cover the cost of the Hillandale News, and after discussion an increase to £4 for U.K. and European members was approved. The dollar rates were left to the Treasurer's discretion pending possible imminent changes in the Exchange Rate.

Arthur Close, our Auditor for many years, regretfully tendered his resignation, and was elected a Life Member in recognition of his services. A new Auditor is now sought.

Christopher Proudfoot is to take over part of the editing of the magazine, and it is particularly requested that all articles for inclusion be typed if possible. The Treasurer also made an appeal for the use of the official forms when ordering spares etc.

Elections: the Officers and Committee for the following year are as follows:

Chairman	Christopher Proudfoot
Vice-Chairman	Dave Roberts
Secretary	John McKeown
Treasurer	Barry Williamson
Committee	B. Raynaud, Frank Andrews, Len Watts.

The 1978 Annual General Meeting (points from which are reported separately) was accompanied by a display of machines and two short programmes.

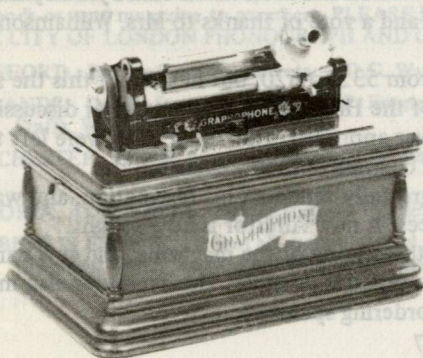
The machines, provided by Messrs. McKeown, Proudfoot and Roberts, included and HMV 460 Lumiere and its close descendant, the 461 internal horn model, a Wilson-horned E.M.G. in a converted HMV cabinet, an early Gibson-tone-arm zonophone, an HMV Model 32 horn gramophone of 1927, an Edison Fireside with Cygnet horn and an HMV 194 Re-Entrant model. These were demonstrated before the A.G.M., and afterwards were used for the two recitals, the 194 and the Fireside being the most favoured.

The first recital was given by Barry Williamson, up from Liverpool and using this fact as his theme. Regal G7620 (Jack Lane, I Come from Liverpool) opened the show, and an amusing account of the old transporter bridge across the Mersey (a remarkable structure, so Barry assured us, being made entirely of rust) introduced Stanley Holloway reciting Runcorn Ferry on Columbia DX 559.

The interesting variety of Liverpudlian accents, which could at one time be used to indicate the street from which a speaker came, was brought to our attention, as was the fact that Tommy Handley's long period of living in London had almost destroyed his Liverpool accent. Piccadilly Record 408 gave us Handley as General Guinness. Then George Baker (from Birkenhead), on HMV B2195, and then the John McCormack recording on HMV GSS1, commemorating the (abortive) foundation of the Roman Catholic Liverpool Cathedral.

Going back in time, George Formby was heard on Blue Amberol 23177, and Ada Jones on 2213. Finally, we heard Jack Lane again (sounding remarkably like George Formby Junior), on Regal G7620.

The final programme was given by Barry Raynaud, concentrating on the last generation of 78s (although he was persuaded to play them accoustically). Unfortunately, time was running on, and this recital had to be curtailed; indeed, our reporter had already had to leave, and precise details of the records played are therefore not to hand. We hope that Barry may be able to give us a fuller recital in the not too distant future.



The Columbia Twentieth Century Premier Graphophone of 1905 is a famous machine, although there seem to be more around than the six-inch cylinders it takes, and no one seems to be able to get the best out of the sound-magnifying reproducer. Shown here is a smaller version, of 1906, known as the Home Premier. Housed in mahogany instead of the more usual oak, this appears to be much less common than its larger brother. Possibly by 1906 interest in expensive cylinder machines for domestic use was waning outside the band of Edison enthusiasts. Photo: Christies, South Kensington

Victoria's World

THE SOUND OF THE ENGLISH MUSIC HALL

From Alan Debus come these notes on the English Music Hall, which originally accompanied a taped programme used to give period flavour to an Exhibition of Victorian photographs at the University of Chicago in 1970. Although we cannot make recordings on the pages of 'Hillandale' (at least, not yet), we have left in the titles of the records on the tape, as many readers will no doubt be able to make good the deficiency from their own collections.

The turn of the century was the apogee of the English Music Hall. Most of the best known stars of English variety were active between 1890 and the outbreak of the first World War. It is also true to state that the most famous Music Hall songs date from this period. Some of these songs exist only in the form of sheet music today, but although the work of many performers has been totally lost, at least some of them sang their songs and recited their monologues for the discs and cylinders of that era.

The present tape is made largely from original recordings dating before 1915. To these have been added some recordings, of the late twenties and the early thirties: this later period witnessed a Music Hall revival which resulted in a series of electrical recordings of the stars of thirty and forty years before. One of the recordings was made in 1960, but it is of a song written in 1910 — and the artist starred in the London Halls in the nineties.

It is appropriate to begin a tape of vintage Music Hall performances with Billy Williams' 1911 disc of "Let's Have a Song on the Graphophone". Known as "The Man in the Velvet Suit", Williams (d. 1915) was well aware of the financial rewards of self-advertising. Dressed in his costume, he toured the London streets in his automobile, advertising his then current engagement. He was also one of the first stars to recognize the potential of the phonograph. He made an enormous number of records and these sold in great quantity throughout the Empire and in the United States. The words of this song really represent an advertisement for Williams' many other records.

1. Billy Williams: Let's Have a Song on the Graphophone (Godfrey-Williams) (Phoenix 042 from Columbia master X64).

Two examples of very early recording technique follow. The first, "The Soldiers of the Queen", was originally a Music Hall song. However, it was lifted above this status when it was sung throughout the Empire by the troops honoring Queen Victoria on her Diamond Jubilee Day in 1897. This recording was made in the United States about 1900. The second, "Goodbye Dolly Gray", was an American popular song written in 1900. It became enormously popular in England as a marching song for the English forces engaged in the South African War. This particular recording is by a popular Music Hall baritone and it was made in London in June, 1902.

2. J. J. Fisher: The Soldiers of the Queen (Leslie Stuart) (7 inch Zonophone J 9479).
3. Leo Stormont: Goodbye Dolly Gray (Barnes-Cobb) (7 inch Berliner 2-2044).

In the nineties and the early years of the new century there were few popular composers more favoured by the English public than Leslie Stuart. Stuart wrote prolifically for the Music Hall and for Musical Comedy. "The Soldiers of the Queen" surely ranks as one of his

most famous songs, but he wrote many others. Late in life — while he was appearing in a review at the London Palladium in 1926 — Stuart made a piano recording of his song hits of thirty years before. Part of that medley is played here. Two other Stuart songs deserve special attention. The first of these is the "Sextette" from "Floradora" which has been sung and parodied ever since it was written in 1900. This recording was made in New York in 1902 and it represents one of the first attempts to record an original cast production.

4. Leslie Stuart playing a Medley of his Song Hits (Little Dolly Daydream; I May be Crazy; In the Shade of the Palm; Lily of Laguna) (12 inch Columbia 9093 — master AX 1369).
5. Vocal Sextette — "Tell Me Pretty Maiden" — from "Floradora" (Stuart) (Marconi 0376 from Columbia master 647).

The second Stuart song of special interest is "Lily of Laguna". This song was written for an American performer, Eugene Stratton (1861-1918). Stratton was an accomplished soft shoe dancer who had come to England with a tour of Haverly's Minstrel Show. Deciding to stay, he soon became a major star of English variety and a close friend of Leslie Stuart. Even though this song derives from the Minstrel tradition, today it almost has the status of a folk song in England. This recording was made in February, 1912.

6. Eugene Stratton: Lily of Laguna (Stuart) (HMV C556 [02364]).

One need not think that dialect comedy was confined to Minstrel Shows and blackface acts at the turn of the century. All dialects formed the basis of specialty acts which were a staple of the English Music Hall as well as American vaudeville. Before the first World War the "Dutch" comedian was a favourite. Although there is no record that English comediennesses went as far as to sing "I Love Wilhelm the Grocer (more than Wilhelm the Kaiser)" as did their American counterparts, both Happy Fanny Fields and May Moore Duprez became "top-liners" because of this type of song. The latter made a few recordings shortly before the War.

7. May Moore Duprez: Gretchen's Little Dutch Band (Davids and Meakin) (Regal G6371 — master 28388).

The topical song was characteristic of popular music seventy years ago. There were songs about political events, inventions, and almost anything that might appear in the news. The next seven records illustrate this type of music. When taxicabs were introduced in London, Johnny Wakefield sang about them in the Halls (1907). Vesta Victoria, a superstar of Variety both in England and in the United States also sang of the difficulties of riding in the new automobiles (September, 1903). These are only two of many songs of the period that belong to this genre. Wilkie Bard, impressed by the possibilities of aerial travel, wrote his "Come Up in My Balloon" in which he suggested trips to the moon (c. 1910). Lloyd George's Budget of 1909 encountered enormous opposition — to the extent that "John Bull's Budget Song" became a standard number for many Music Hall comedians. In it both the Prime Minister and Winston Churchill were attacked, while loyal Britons were urged to give "three cheers for emigration" (July, 1909). The difficulties of life in England were emphasized also by Whit Cunliffe who — in his "You'll Get on in England (if You're Not an Englishman)" — suggested that success came most easily to those who had immigrated. He advised the members of his audience to say that "they came from Yankee Land or the islands of Japan" (c. 1907). The Suffragette movement was front page news in Edwardian England and the militant women were the butt of innumerable barbs directed at them by Music Hall comedians. Wilkie Bard introduced a mock suffragette

meeting into his version of "Put Me Upon an Island (Where the Girls are Few)" (c. 1910), while Charman and Cove capitalized on the craze for American ragtime in singing their "Ragtime Suffragette" (c. 1911). Of these artists, Vesta Victoria, Wilkie Bard, and Whit Cunliffe were at the top of their profession, commanding enormous salaries for the period.

8. Johnny Wakefield: The New Taximeter Car (Zonophone X-42702 – master 7199e).
9. Vest Victoria: On a Motor Car (Gramophone Concert G.C. 3454 – master 3951-R).
10. Wilkie Bard: Come Up in My Balloon (Bard) (Jumbo A23151).
11. Arthur Gilbert: John Bull's Budget Song (HMV C490 [02204]).
12. Whit Cunliffe: You'll Get On In England (If You're Not an Englishman) (Albion 1237 – master 9827).
13. Wilkie Bard: Put Me Upon an Island (Where the Girls Are Few) (Jumbo 295 – master A23272).
14. J. Charman and H. Cove: That Ragtime Suffragette (Williams-Ayer) (Grammavox E114).

The impact of American popular music on England is seen in the last item. Indeed, the Englishman's fascination with the United States is reflected on many of the recordings of the early part of the century. American songs were often extremely popular as originally written – an unusual example is that of an English Music Hall comedian singing George M. Cohan's "Yankee Doodle Dandy" (March, 1906). However, when the words of a song would have been meaningless to a London audience, lyricists took the liberty of completely altering the words. Florrie Forde's song hit "Down at the Old Bull and Bush" was originally a product of Tin Pan Alley titled "Under the Anheuser Busch". A similar case may be found in the song "Carrie", here sung by the star of Musical Comedy and Music Hall, George Grossmith, Jr. (c. 1909). In its original form, this selection had glorified the wonders of the 1904 Fair under the title "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis".

15. Burt Shepard: Yankee Doodle Dandy (Cohan) (Gramophone Concert G.C. 3-2405).
16. George Grossmith, Jr.: Carrie (Jumbo 415 – master A28061).

Nor was the American influence limited to music alone. All aspects of the American theatre had an impact in England. The minstrel show has already been mentioned, and there is little doubt that travelling companies of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" were as popular in England as they were here in the late 19th century. The American actor, Joseph Jefferson, scored one of his greatest successes when he introduced his "Rip Van Winkle" in London in 1860, while at the end of the century the American star, Bert Williams, was teaching the Cakewalk to the Prince of Wales. If American artists often found an appreciative audience in London, the reverse was also true. The sister of the famous Marie Lloyd, Alice, captivated American audiences for a period of nearly twenty years in vaudeville and in a series of musical reviews. She recorded several of her most popular songs for Victor in 1907. Of these, her "seaside" number, "You Splash Me and I'll Splash You", was most successful. Similarly, the polished English artist, George Lashwood, appeared in New York for an American tour in 1910. With top hat and cane he sang his famous waltz song, "In the Twi-Twi-Twilight". The Music Hall performer best known in the United States was Harry Lauder (1870-1950). Lauder commanded the highest salary of all those on the American vaudeville stage and he was so famous that at least on one occasion his audience waited for hours when his ship was late in arriving in New York. Although premium prices were demanded for his records, both his Edison cylinders and his Victor discs were consistently among the best selling records of the 1910-1925 period. By the late 1920s Victor

promoted him to "red seal" status and even today some of his records are available from dealers in long-playing form. The Lauder selection on this tape is a medley of his songs recorded about 1930.

17. Alice Lloyd: You Splash Me and I'll Splash You (Lamb) (Victor 16058 [5225]).
18. George Lashwood: In the Twi-Twi-Twilight (Darewski) (Zonophone X-42616).
19. Sir Harry Lauder: Medley (She is Ma Daisy; We Parted on the Shore; Roaming in the Gloaming; I've Got Something in the Bottle for the Morning; The Wedding of Sandy MacNab; Lass of Killiecranki; Wee Deoch and Doris) (Canadian Victor 29034).

Except for English stars who appeared in the United States, few male impersonators reached stardom on this side of the Atlantic. The kind of act is a part of the continuing tradition of popular British vaudeville. The three performers presented here were considered the best of their type. The first, Vesta Tilley, called the "Idol of London" on her record labels, was a beautiful woman who had introduced Charles K. Harris' "After the Ball" on the London stage in the early nineties. Later she was best known for her male impersonations such as "Following in Father's Footsteps", "Sidney's Holiday", "Jolly Good Luck to the Girl Who Loves a Soldier", "Algy (The Piccadilly Johnny with the Little Glass Eye)", and her patriotic song of 1914, "The Army of Today's All Right!" Typical of her work is her 1910 recording of "The Girls I Left Behind Me"

Ella Shields was an American vaudevillian who only became a major star after going to England. Her most famous song was "Burlington Bertie from Bow" which she first sang in the early years of the century. The recording presented here was made in the mid-thirties.

On the stage as a child in 1888, Hetty King first appeared in London in 1897. She is best known for "top hat and cane" numbers in which she proceeds to light and smoke cigars while singing. Typical of her songs are "I'm Afraid to Come Home in the Dark" in which she portrays a hen-pecked husband and "All the Nice Girls Love a Sailor". She introduced the latter classic in 1910 and she has been singing it ever since. The version on this tape was taken at an actual Music Hall performance in London about 1960. During the summer of 1969—at the age of 86—she starred in a special show at the Hippodrome in Eastbourne. The production was so successful that the theatre had to hold her over for an additional three weeks into early October.

20. Vesta Tilley: The Girls I Left Behind Me (Jumbo 561 — master A25113).
21. Ella Shields: Burlington Bertie from Bow (Hargreaves) (Decca F5228 — master TB.1554).
22. Hetty King: All the Nice Girls Love a Sailor (Recorded live from a Music Hall performance at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square [Fontana Lp TFL. 5043]).

Above all, Music Hall stood for songs that could be sung. Vesta Victoria's song hits were so popular in the United States by 1907 that Columbia had a medley of them recorded by their house orchestra.

23. Columbia Orchestra: Medley of Vesta Victoria's Songs (Waiting at the Church; It's All Right in the Summertime; I've Told His Missus All About Him; Poor John) (Aretino D637 — Columbia master 3643).

Billy Merson specialized in comic songs in which he played many characters. In "Out on the Prairie" he brought the American West into London variety — out West, that is, in Indiana. Merson is another artist who was brought back in the Music Hall revival of the early thirties to re-record his songs and sketches that really belonged to an earlier generation.

24. Billy Merson: Out on the Prairie (Merson) (Edison Bell Winner W.55).

A perennial favourite is "The Honeysuckle and the Bee". Introduced in vaudeville in the United States by Lulu Glaser in 1901, this song was at best a limited success. In England the story was quite different. There the song was introduced by the musical comedy star, Ellaline Terriss, and it immediately became associated with her. This is what she was asked to sing when she appeared on BBC television at the age of 90 not too many years ago. This recording dates from the mid-thirties and on it she is introduced by her husband, Seymour Hicks.

25. Ellaline Terriss: The Honeysuckle and the Bee (Fitz and Penn) (HMV C2432).

It would be impossible to think of the English Music Hall without songs of the seaside. Of these none is better known than "I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside" which is always associated with Mark Sheridan, one of the Lion Comiques of Variety. While performing he usually wore a black frock coat, tall hat, sailor's trousers with bell bottoms and straps around the knees and flourished an umbrella or cane. Although this song is a classic of its kind, Sheridan seems to have recorded it only once – in 1913.

26. Mark Sheridan: I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside (Scala 414).

Gertie Gitana was a song stylist who lived long enough to star in the Music Hall revival of the thirties. Her records show that she relied heavily on yodeling and falsetto effects in her act. Her most popular songs, "Nellie Dean" and "Silver Bell" were both of American origin and she sang the latter always with a silver top hat. "Silver Bell" was a big hit in America in 1910, and in England it became Gitana's signature. This disc dates from about 1933.

27. Gertie Gitana: Silver Bell (Madden-Wenrich) (Edison Bell Radio 1576).

Harry Champion typifies the English specialist in rapid fire comic songs. Champion maintained rapid fire comic songs. Champion maintained his popularity with numbers such as "Boiled Beef and Carrots", "Cover It Quick, Jemima" – and "I'm Henry the Eighth I Am" which was recently revived by Herman's Hermits. Although this recording dates from 1931, Champion introduced the song before the first World War.

28. Harry Champion: I'm Henry the Eighth I Am (Murray-Weston) (Music for Pleasure Lp MFP 1146).

If there was one "Queen" of English Variety it was Marie Lloyd. She sang Cockney character songs such as "I'm One of the Ruins Cromwell Knocked About a Bit", "Don't Dilly Dally on the Way", and "A Little Bit of What You Fancy Does You Good". Hoping to follow the successes of Vesta Tilley, Harry Lauder, and her sister Alice in the United States, she tried American vaudeville early in the century. The experiment was a disaster, for the New York audiences that had embraced Alice rejected Marie's songs as crude and risqué. She died in 1922 and her few recordings are quite rare today. The one presented here was made in London about 1911.

29. Marie Lloyd: When I Take My Morning Promenade (Mills-Scott) (Zonophone 1026 – master X-43382).

Charles Coborn was a Music Hall star well known in the nineteenth century. He continued to perform until his death at the age of 91 in 1945. Coborn was always associated with the songs "Two Lovely Black Eyes" and "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo". He introduced the latter in 1892.

30. Charles Coborn: The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo (Gilbert) (Columbia 5665 – master A9437). Recorded c. 1930).

Like many others on this tape, Florrie Forde was a star before the turn of the century. And like Charles Coborn she lived to entertain the British troops in the second World War. She died shortly after a performance for the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy in 1940. Until her

death she remained one of the most beloved figures of the English Music Hall, and she was probably associated with more song hits than any other single Variety performer. In addition to the songs in the following medley she was particularly well known for her versions of "Down at the Old Bull and Bush" and "It's a Long Way to Tipperary". It is fitting that this tape should close with Florrie Forde singing "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag". In effect the first World War put an end to the Music Hall tradition. None of the songs on this tape were written after 1915 and all of the performers presented here were billed as stars prior to that date. And although some of the recordings date from the thirties, they exist because of a nostalgic revival rather than a true new surge of life in this form of entertainment.

31. Florrie Forde: Medley (Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly? [Murphy-Letters] ; Hold Your Hand Out, Naughty Boy [Murphy-David] ; Flanagan [Murphy-Letters] ; Oh! Oh! Antonio [Murphy-Lipton] ; Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag [Powell-Asaf]) (Regal G9461 — master A9414). Recorded August 13, 1929. Notes by Allen G. Debus

Programmes for the Society's meetings in London 1978-9

In case it proves necessary to alter any of the dates given, please check in the Almanac nearer the time.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| November 1st | Frank Andrews: The Story of John Bull Records |
| December 6th | Members Night: Bring your own records, cylinder or disc, seasonably festive. |
| January 10th | John McKeown (subject to be announced). |
| February 7th | Frank Holland: Life in the National Piano Museum. |
| March 7th | Len Watts (and members' contributions): non-Pathe vertical-cut discs. |
| April 4th | V. K. Chew: The Science Museum Collection (tape). |
| May 2nd | G. L. Frow: Diamond Jubilee Programme; a repeat of the first Society programme given by Adrian Sykes in 1919. |
| June 6th | Bill Brott: Operatic Cylinders |
| July 4th | T. Massey (subject to be announced). |

All the above meetings will be at the Bloomsbury Institute, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.1, on Wednesdays at 7.00 p.m.

The following will be on Saturdays, at the Eccentric Club or at Debenham's Store in Oxford Street:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| August 4th | Dave Roberts: Reproducers and Soundboxes. |
| September 1st | Len Petts: The Birth of the Gramophone Co., 1898-1903. |
| October 6th | Annual General Meeting (in the afternoon, so that members can attend from far away): two short programmes and a range of machines in addition to the A.G.M. |

Several of these programmes will be presented on original machines, and there will be further machines on display at some meetings. We hope you can bring some item of interest when you attend a meeting, be it a soundbox, phonograph, gramophone, unusual record or even a needle-tin.

I look forward to seeing you all!

Dave Roberts

The Body and Soul of the Gramophone

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE CLOCKWORK ACOUSTIC

PART 6 – EXPERIMENTS WITH DIAPHRAGMS

I am not a mathematician – never was, for despite every effort, at a certain stage in the subject, there was a complete cut-off, as if dense fog descended and the whole picture vanished. The old brainbox ceased to register as if the diaphragm of my soundbox was not made to respond to certain modulations in a sound-track. To me, a page of calculus presents no picture and is meaningless, and so I have to go about my investigations the hard way and work by experiment.

As the result of experiment it has become evident to me that even though the soundbox is a very simple mechanical contrivance, the technical factors controlling its performance are as numerous and complex as those governing the performance of the most sophisticated electrical record-player. This is confirmed by P. W. Temple's interesting article in the December 1977 'Hillandale News', explaining the H.M.V. Re-entrant gramophone and the 5a soundbox. Having been a radio officer, I now see clearly the analogy between the soundbox and its associated tone system, and an electrical circuit. My own experiments indicate that optimum reproduction depends on the matching of the mechanical and acoustic properties of the soundbox housing, its stylus, diaphragm and gaskets. In turn, the soundbox must be matched to the horn. Exactly the same applies to a wireless receiver, whose component parts must be matched to each other electrically.

I realised that the main weakness of the average acoustic gramophone was its inability to give full audible response to the bass frequencies. On a cheap machine, while the soundbox was felt to be vibrating at a low frequency, the drums, double bass and deep organ notes could not be heard at all. Thus the whole sound picture was out of balance, the bass notes being largely absorbed by the soundbox housing and the tone-arm, with comparatively little response from the diaphragm. Little of the bass register was getting into the horn. An exponential horn large enough to amplify the weak bass to reasonable proportions would be inconveniently bulky. I therefore considered whether it might be a good idea to make a gasket soft and flexible enough to allow the diaphragm as a whole to move with the bass frequencies, whereas normally the maximum movement is at the centre, the perimeter being held immovably between the gaskets.

I took two pieces of soft rubber cycle-valve tubing and with considerable tedium cut a thin strip out of one side of each tube with scissors. This gave the gaskets still further compliance by leaving them with a 'C'-shaped cross-section. Having cut the two lengths to fit the soundbox, I put in the mica diaphragm and looked forward to some exciting results. It didn't work. All it did was reduce drastically the definition of the treble without making any improvement to the bass, producing a dully, muddy tone with a horrible, nasal-sounding overall distortion. I tried the same thing with a metal diaphragm by crimping the flange to stiffen it, but it was no better. Having noted the brilliant definition and full bass

reproduction from an H.M.V. No.4 soundbox with its solid gaskets, I found a lot of questions to be answered.

In order to check results and glean some information, I removed the hollow white gasket from another mica soundbox and replaced it with two solid rubber rings taken from paste-pot lids, which just fitted the soundbox. These were a tight fit when the back was screwed down, so that I could now find out the effect of tightening the gasket. The tone was even sharper and clearer than that produced with the original hollow gaskets, but the bass was less distinct because the pressure of the gasket restricted the movement of the diaphragm — more so because the gasket was of rectangular cross-section. I next tried a round solid gasket from a Goldring soundbox. This produced a slightly fuller tone with a finer definition, presumably because the round edge of the gasket gave greater movement to the diaphragm, like the round cantilever supports of a bridge. In the H.M.V. No.4, the solid gaskets are of half-round section, with the rounded edge in contact with the diaphragm. It seemed, therefore, that solid, round gaskets were better than the hollow variety, giving sharper definition, fuller tone and more natural tone with less distortion. The vital difference must be in the degree of 'bounce'. (Surely this depends on the resilience of the particular piece of rubber, which can be considerable in a new hollow gasket, while many solid ones have hardly any at all — Ed.)

I examined several H.M.V. No.4 boxes and found that while in all of them the gasket pressure was approximately right, they varied very slightly in proportion. I took the gasket from a comparatively 'thin' box and fixed it round the mica in a slightly wider one so that the gasket was on the slack side. The result was a rather poor tone which lacked the crisp definition it should have. There was slightly 'reedy' effect due to the 'flapping' of the loose edges of the diaphragm and also a measure of distortion. Next I tightened up slightly by removing the back of the box and inserting a ring of thin paper above the gasket.. This stopped the flapping and reediness, but the sound was still not particularly sharp or free of distortion. A second paper ring made the gasket pressure exactly right and the performance of that soundbox was even better than when it was new. Further tightening of the gasket began to take the bass and 'body' out of the tone, progressively so as the pressure was increased. I therefore left this soundbox with just the two rings in it.

This hand-tuning is really necessary for all soundboxes. During a visit to Hayes when gramophones were still being produced there, I watched deft operators assembling the soundboxes. Each took only three or four minutes to put together; so fast that I wondered how the stylus suspension could be adjusted on all these soundboxes with a reasonable degree of accuracy. The pivot adjustment is of the utmost importance in the tuning of a soundbox, for it directly affects the tracking of the needle in the groove and record life. If a soundbox is not properly tuned and adjusted, all the mathematical formulae in the world are compromised.

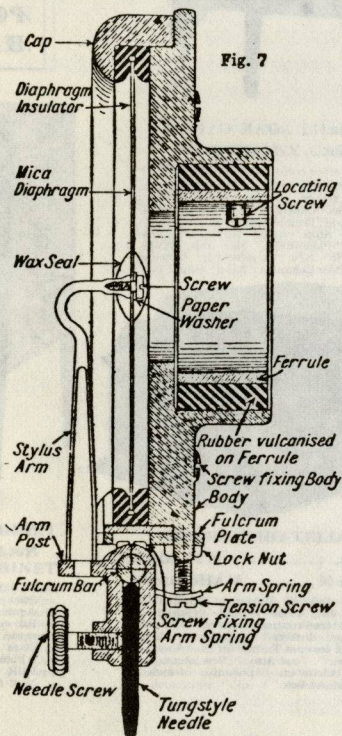
My experiments with mica diaphragms have so far shown three factors affecting performance; the thickness, the shape and resilience of the gaskets and the pressure exerted on the gaskets with the back-plate in position. It appears that, for the best results, the pressure on the gasket should be slightly more than the minimum necessary to exclude any air gaps between the gasket and diaphragm.

The slightest gap anywhere around the edge will cause chatter or reediness.

Among my stock of bits and pieces I had some lengths of hollow rubber gasket only $1/16''$ outside diameter. On examining this closely, I found the rubber was quite tough but much more resilient than the normal gasket used for soundboxes. It could be used in a soundbox, its narrow gauge would leave almost the whole area of the diaphragm free to respond. I resolved to try it out on an H.M.V. No.4, but the gasket was so narrow as to fall short of the edge of the diaphragm. I got round that by cutting a narrow strip of thin cardboard and fitting it like a collar round the inside perimeter of the soundbox, thus slightly reducing its effective diameter. The gasket then lay just beneath the edge of the diaphragm. After fixing the stylus to the diaphragm and placing the second gasket in place, I inserted a couple of paper rings to take up the space left between the narrow gasket and the back-plate. (Fortunately, the thickness of the original gasket in this case is little more than $1/16''$, so that the alignment was unaffected.) You can get a good idea of the tuning of a soundbox by tapping the business end of the stylus bar with your finger-nail. There should be a sharp, crisp sound with an almost metallic tinkle. That was the sound I got, so the prospects were good. On playing a record, I was amazed at the very full and brilliant tone produced, and the tracking seemed perfect. There seemed to be more bass than with the original gasket, and the general tone seemed crisper. I treated seven more No.4s in the same way, leaving

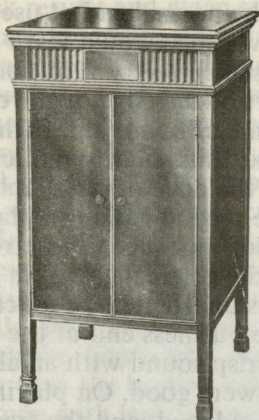
my remaining five in their original state. Overall, I would say that there was a noticeable improvement in tonal range, tonal balance and tracking with the new gaskets.

On the strength of this result, I tried the small gaskets on my two H.M.V. Exhibition soundboxes and my No.2. Since these are smaller than the No.4, the normal $1/8''$ gasket takes up a larger proportion of the diaphragm area, thus restricting movement and contributing to a shrill tone, lacking in depth. Fortunately, I had mica diaphragms that fitted into both the Exhibition and No.2 boxes closely enough for the $1/16''$ gasket to support the edge of the diaphragm. All I had to do was insert cardboard rings to take up the depth above and below the gaskets so as to preserve the relative position of the diaphragm to the stylus-bar. The effect of the thin gasket in these boxes was even more marked than with the No.4. In their original state, they were unable to cope with the modulation amplitudes of many electrical recordings. However, with the greater flexibility afforded by my $1/16''$ gaskets, my two Exhibition soundboxes can now play most symphonic recordings with beautiful, clear definition almost equal to that of a No.4, and my No.2 is every bit as good as a No.4.



Cross-section of an H.M.V. No.2 soundbox.

The Viva-tonal Columbia



No. 132a. OAK CABINET.

No. 133a. MAHOGANY CABINET.

CABINET.—Oak (or Mahogany, Satin finish). Height 38½-ins., width 21-ins., depth 21½-ins. Fretted grille behind doors. Specially powerful British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. — Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.



No. 125a. OAK CABINET.

No. 126a. MAHOGANY CABINET.

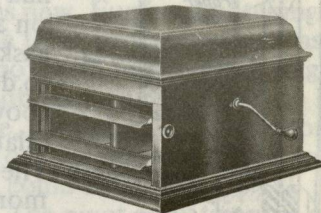
CABINET.—Oak (or Mahogany, Satin finish). Height 37½-ins., width 17½-ins., depth 19-ins. Cupboard for storing Records. British-made Double-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. New stereoscopic acoustic projector. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.



CONSOLE MODEL
(Horizontal Grand).

No. 155a. OAK.

Height 36½-ins., width 33-ins., depth 22½-ins. Two side sections for storing Records. Fretted grille behind doors. British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. — Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.

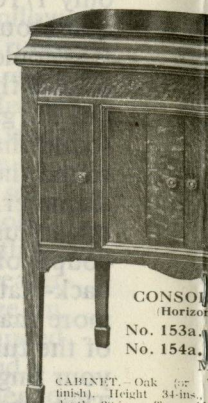


SMALL TABLE GRAND.

No. 117a. OAK.

No. 118a. MAHOGANY.

CABINET.—Oak (or Mahogany, Satin finish). Height 12½-ins., width 17½-ins., depth 19-ins. Fitted with tone-control shutters. Two inset needle cups. British Single-Spring Motor. 11-in. Velvet-covered Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. New stereoscopic amplifying Chamber. Columbia detachable "No. 9" Sound-Box.



CONSO
(Horizontal)

No. 153a.

No. 154a.

CABINET.—Oak (or Mahogany, Satin finish). Height 34-ins., depth 20-ins. Two side sections for storing Records. British-made Double-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. New stereoscopic acoustic projector. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.

PRICE BACK



BOUDOIR
CABINET

No. 123a.

No. 124a.

CABINET.—Oak (or Mahogany, Satin finish). Height 34-ins., depth 18-ins. Cupboard for storing Records. Three inset needle cups. British Double-Spring Motor. 12-in. Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. — New stereoscopic acoustic projector. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.

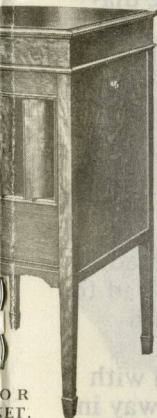
**1929 MODELS
with Newest
PLANO-REFLEX
Principles.**



**MAHOGANY.
Satin finish.**

MAHOGANY. Satin finish. Height 40 ins., width 23 ins., depth 23 ins. Fretted grille behind doors. Specially powerful British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.

**S ON
PAGE.**



**OR
SET.**

**MAHOGANY
CABINET.**

MAHOGANY. Satin finish. Height 40 ins., width 23 ins., depth 23 ins. Fretted grille behind doors. Specially powerful British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.



No. 131a.

MAHOGANY CABINET.

CABINET.—Mahogany, Satin finish. Height 40 ins., width 23 ins., depth 23 ins. Fretted grille behind doors. British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. All fittings gold-plated. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.

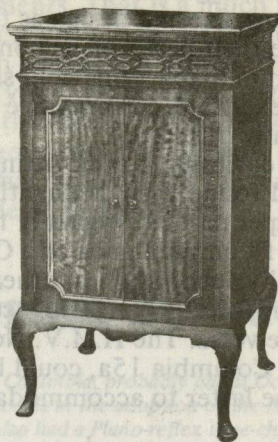


STANDARD TABLE GRAND.

No. 119a. OAK.

No. 120a. MAHOGANY.

CABINET.—Oak (or Mahogany, Satin finish). Height 40 ins., width 23 ins., depth 23 ins. Fitted with tone-control shutters. Three inset needle cups. British-made Double-Spring Motor. 12-in. Velvet-covered Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. New stereoscopic Amplifying Chamber. Columbia detachable "No. 9" Sound-Box.



No. 134a.

MAHOGANY CABINET.

CABINET.—Mahogany, Satin finish. Height 40 ins., width 23 ins., depth 23 ins. Fretted grille behind doors. Specially powerful British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.



CONSOLE MODEL

(Horizontal Grand).

No. 156a. MAHOGANY.

Height 34 ins., width 31 ins., depth 21 ins. Two side sections for storing Records. British-made Triple-Spring Motor. Set-Automatic Stop. 12-in. Velvet Turntable. New Columbia "Plano-reflex" Tone-Arm. TONE-CHAMBER. Constructed on new "Plano-reflex" principles. New Columbia "No. 9" Sound-Box.

It therefore seems that the size of a soundbox is not related to its performance. In fact, I have found some smaller soundboxes (mica or metal) produce better results than some bigger ones. Furthermore, I have two Swiss-made soundboxes of precisely the same size and design as the Exhibition, and yet the same treatment did not improve their performance one bit. I have two Columbia No.9 soundboxes (with 58mm diaphragms) and six of the smaller 15a (53mm diaphragms). In comparing the excellent performance of one model against the other, it is impossible to detect any difference.

Out of sheer curiosity, I tried fitting Columbia diaphragms into different soundboxes and found them brilliantly successful in a number of cases, especially with some cheaper models originally fitted with metal diaphragms. Sometimes, it was possible to fit either a mica or a Columbia diaphragm. On some soundboxes either was equally successful, on other one or the other was better. More often mica did not improve the performance of a box originally fitted with a metal diaphragm and vice versa. The H.M.V. No.4, designed for mica and of the same diameter as the Columbia 15a, could be fitted with a 15a diaphragm by depressing the centre of the latter to accommodate the stylus-bar, but the results were disappointing.

Fitting a mica diaphragm to a Columbia No.9 is difficult because the stylus-bar is designed to fit a domed diaphragm, but I managed to bend the stylus-bar on one so that it made contact with the mica. However, the tone was shallow, shrill and squeaky, so I gave that idea up. Next I tried simulating a cone speaker diaphragm by attaching a large paper cone to a very narrow flange of thin metal foil, so that this flexible flange would give full freedom of movement to the diaphragm as a whole. I fitted it to a large Goldring soundbox, but the results were no better than with the valve-rubber gaskets mentioned earlier.

Finally I trimmed and modified (by depressing its dome) a Columbia diaphragm and fitted it to an H.M.V. No.2 soundbox between a pair of 1/16" gaskets. This was my most successful experiment; the results were astounding. The tone was crystal clear and the tonal balance superb and free of any distortion. The bass thundered out, and the tracking was smooth and free of chatter. This No.2 was more powerful than any of my others. Such was the volume that a friend of mine who was passing my house while a record was playing remarked, "My word, Jim, that's a fine radiogram you have!" However, after a time I had to put the original mica back because the No.2 has no protective shield to guard against finger pressure or other damage to the delicate diaphragm.

Soundboxes vary so much in size and design that you can compare them with people, who react in different ways according to their make-up and to the way in which they are treated. You can experiment with soundboxes and have the fun and unforeseeable excitement of seeing and hearing for yourself what happens. You can't do that when everything is done from sums on paper or from computerised tabulators. Put a modern cassette in the slot of a sophisticated hi-fi machine, press a button and Bob's your uncle! You can't compare or liken that to anything — it has no personality.

My next article will deal with the main types of soundbox construction. Have a bumper Christmas and a grand New Year!

E. J. Goodall

Editor's Comment: It is interesting, and indeed encouraging, to find so many theories of soundbox design confirmed and expounded by someone who has reached these conclusions by his own experiments. That is a much better way of finding out than by reading someone else's account of theories which may have been arrived at by third, fourth or umpteenth parties. I do hope, though, that readers will not be encouraged to start modifying irreplaceable original parts like Columbia No.9 diaphragms. This was fine in the days when your local gramophone shop would have had a supply of replacements, but we now owe it to future generations of collectors to keep original components the way the manufacturer made them — even if they are capable of improvement!

Christmas presents from 50 years ago

Our centre-page spread shows one side of a leaflet issued by Columbia, probably about October 1928, showing the 1929 Grafonolas. These differed from earlier models in the adoption of the No. 9 soundbox and the Plano-reflex tone-arm. The most expensive models also had a Plano-reflex tone-chamber. The Plano-reflex principle is explained in one of the panels on the back of the leaflet, here reproduced on an adjoining page.

The only model which did not have the No. 9 soundbox and Plano-reflex tone-arm was the 113a portable; this, continued from the previous year's range, was a design from the American end of Columbia (at that time a subsidiary of the London-based Columbia Graphophone Co.), and had a typical American tone-arm of die-cast construction with an S-shaped goose-neck. Also typically American was the cushion-topped lid. The soundbox was later adopted, as the 15a and 15b, for all the English Columbia models.



Caruso—boy soprano

RECORD OF ENRICO CARUSO

Tenor, 110 yrs. old. v.g.d. cond.

Phone Dover after 10 a.m. [REDACTED]

Daily Mail Mon. Sept. 11 1978

A remarkable record made at the age of five.

A gramophone with a cygnet horn may sound a bit Irish, and that is exactly what it is. Dating from about 1930, this Emerald Isle machine has a German base and an English (Limited) sound box. Where the horn was made I know not; was there a horn factory in Ireland, or did this part also come from Germany?

Photo: Christies, South Kensington

People, Paper and Things

BY GEORGE FROW

With other material under my name this month, I don't want to lay myself open to assertions of hogging the columns, so I will try and be brief in presenting what has come my way in the last couple of months.

Firstly this magazine has a competitor about to be born, a new magazine called *Sounds Vintage*, which is being issued in January 1979 and states itself to be 'The Magazine for Vintage Wireless and Sound Equipment, Gramophones and Records, Literature, Instruments'. It will be produced by Colin Riches and Norman Stevens, both late of *Practical Wireless*, though I am not sure who wears the editor's obligatory green eyeshade. Without great mental strain I can think of over a handful of magazines which cater for the collector of early talking machines and records, and hope there will be sufficient material for everybody without causing too much anaemia. *Sounds Vintage* will be published bi-monthly (an ambiguous expression), and the annual subscription is U.K. £5-80, Overseas £5-80 (surface) and £6-80 (air), and sterling drafts are requested; one imagines there will be six issues a year and not twenty-four for the price! The address is Subscription Dept., Sounds Vintage, 28 Chestwood Close, Billericay, Essex, England. There will be 32 pages, including covers, and will feature letter pages, readers' sales and wants pages, as well as illustrated articles. We hasten to wish it good luck and may it flourish.

Recently I was talking to an American who is prepared to restore the paintwork on morning glory horns, and repaint the flowers on them for you. He is Kurt Stern, [redacted] West Orange, New Jersey, 07052, United States, [redacted], and should be contacted direct. This note is obviously of more interest to those within crating distance, as there is that niggling limitation on the size of packets one can send through the mail.

Our French counterpart is La Societe Francaise des Archives de la Musique et du Phonographe — a name exceeding even our own lengthy monniker. The annual subscription to this body is a symbolic one franc, but it will cost you 70 francs to have 10 issues of the Societe's Bulletin every year. Those anxious to widen their phonograph and gramophone horizons on to the European mainland should write to Box 76, Avenue Michelet, 93400 SAINT OUEN-SUR-SEINE, France, enclosing as requested specie, cheque or stamps.

G. D. Goff of [redacted], Wakefield, England, who I think is a member, has a very good collection of cylinders of Gilbert and Sullivan, and asks through Michael Walters if our membership can help him locate a few off-the-beaten-track cylinders of G & S or just simply Sullivan. Records include Edison Bell, Russell Indestructibles and Britannia items of "The Emerald Isle", "Rose of Persia", "Trial by Jury"; replies to Mr. Goff, please.

Finally I have a Brochure from R. J. Nokes, [redacted] Bognor Regis, Sussex, England, offering Reproduction Edison Gem Cases. These are bentwood, of course, with base and french polished, and carry the Edison trade mark. There are two types, one made for the key machine, and one for the red model, the former £36, the latter at £42, both including postage anywhere. Enquiries direct to Reg Nokes, who tells me that he would be prepared to fit the machine into the case at no extra charge.

Edison Phonograph Concert 1978

BY GEORGE FROW

There were three Britons present at the 1978 Edison Phonograph Concert held at the Thomas A. Edison Junior High School, West Orange, on September 30th.

The purpose of the annual concerts is to have an opportunity to hear and meet surviving Edison recording artists, and for collectors of various machines and records to get together; also in the past unpublished Edison recorded material has been aired. It happened entirely by chance that Dr. Alistair Thomson, Joe Pengelly and your correspondent were all there at that date for different reasons.

The three Edison performers were Hazel Dann, of the Dann Trio, a string and brass sister act from Massachusetts, Douglas Stanbury, baritone, who made several records for Edison in the twenties, and Paulo Gruppé, the cellist, whose first Edison records were made in 1912, and who sometimes recorded in small groups including The Tollefsen Trio.

Edna White, who first made Edison Records in 1920, told us something of her musical background and why she chose to be a trumpet star.

Another speaker was Dr. Alistair Thomson, late head of Physics at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. It was he who played host at the Museum in July last year, when the most beautiful collection of talking machines yet seen anywhere was assembled for public display for the Centenary year.

Joe Pengelly demonstrated Blue Amberols and Indestructible records, using a 66 year old Opera Phonograph with comparison of tapes made from a pick-up of his own design, these made an impressive noise in the large concert hall, and we wished that time had not been pushing us along so. We hope he will one day show us what can be got off early wax cylinders by this method.

Some words on the birth and background of this Society were contributed by the writer; afterwards all adjourned to refreshment in the gymnasium.

The background work to the Concert was prepared by Lynn Wightman, principal officer on the Edison Site, and Leah S. Burt, assistant archivist. Both introduced the items, and accompaniments were splendidly arranged and played by Milford Fargo.

As a sequel to the above Report, I would like to mention some of the phonograph people with whom this visit brought contact. There was a happy evening with Allen Koenigsberg in Brooklyn, and I had an opportunity to see not only his fine machines but the other lines of collecting with which Judy and he surround themselves. What kindness, and such a pity that time was so short. Wendell Moore has been a provider of reprints of The Edison Phonograph Monthly to many of us and a rare correspondent with me, but he and Mike Biel and Joe Pengelly and I spent a memorable evening together, the more remarkable because Wendell had been driving through the previous night the long haul from Indiana.

An invitation from Charley Hummel brought one face to face with another remarkable collection, lovingly cared for and well able to speak out for itself. Like most of us, Charley hasn't space enough to lay it out as he would like, but I've yet to meet a collector who admits he has. While on the subject of this collection, there is a noticeable difference between what is available in the United States and United Kingdom, and this is so apparent when one is shown these advanced collections. Chests of drawers for cylinders and electric coin-operated phonographs are really thin on the ground on this side, but conversely one sees few continental European machines in these displays.

Among those at the Concert with whom there was an opportunity for a few words were Ray Wile, Bill Bryant, Kurt Stern, Paul Charosh, Fred Williams, Marty Assman, Anton Johannes, George Blacker, Tim Brooks, Eric Anderson, Bill Rollins and Fred Hauck. Not all these are members, but are doubtless known to many readers, and one wished for hours enough to follow up their invitations. One I talked to showed me photographs of a beautiful Gold-plated Triumph Phonograph; in its time that would have meant an extra \$50 on a \$50 machine, and the second picture that I have seen of such a finish on an Edison machine although the Special Finishes are apparently sometimes encountered in the States, and I was shown a Nickel-finished Edison, a Triumph if I recall correctly.

Good friends whom I was privileged to meet again were Harold and Mrs. Anderson; his name crops up continually in the 20s Edison files, and he was able to record some of his memories of the Company for Joe Pengelly.

Finally a word of thanks to Lynn Wightman, Reed Abel and all those excellent people at the Site for their various kindnesses, and in particular to Leah and Wally Burt who were helpful in every respect. I know Joe Pengelly would agree with me that our visit there was an experience we would not have missed.

If I may hang on a P.P.S., I feel it fair to mention various bits of paperwork acquired at the West Orange Concert and elsewhere which readers might care to follow up, but all enquiries to the addresses shown as I do not know more details than those given:-

From Allen Koenigsberg, [REDACTED] Brooklyn N.Y. 11226

'A Wonderful Invention'. Brief History of the Phonograph from Tin-foil to the L.P. by Jas. R. Smart and Jon W. Newsom, Library of Congress 1977 40 pp; illustrated.

Victor Disk Talking Machine Catalogue c. 1902, 20 pp.

Victor Repair Manual (from 1911-1917, separate manuals under one cover). Covering Victor 0, I, II, III, IV, V, VI, Victrola IV, Victor XXV, Victrola X, Exhibition Soundbox, Victor motor repairs.

Victor Machine Catalogue c. 1908, horn, table, uprights and all accessories.

"Proceedings of the 1890 Convention of Local Phonograph Companies". Over 200 pages of Proceedings with Introduction by Ray Wile setting out the position of these Companies in 1890 in the United States.

From The Edison Nat'l Historic Site, Main Street at Lakeside Ave., West Orange, New Jersey, 07052.

"Edison Disc Recordings", compiled by Ray Wile. 472 pages, Cost \$12.50 plus postage. Postage rate not available at time of our going to press, but include enough to cover 3 lb. weight.

From Record Research, [REDACTED] Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205

Pages of articles on record companies, artists and labels, with end pages of auction items. Cost \$4 for 10 issues per year. Editors Len Kunstadt and Bob Colton.

From Association for Recorded Sound Collections

James Wright, Executive Secretary, Fine Arts Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87131.

\$10 covers dues for one year, and this includes the ARSC Journal and Bulletin, quarterly newsletters and mailings announcing the Annual Conference.

From Milford H. Fargo, [REDACTED] Fairport, N.Y. 14450

"The Ada Jones Memorial Collection". 50 pages of disc and cylinder recordings, including duets and concerted items — \$2 including postage.

12th July, 1978

[REDACTED]
STAFFORD,
Staffordshire,
ST17 4LW.

Dear Sir,

Though not a subscriber to your magazine I saw your June issue which featured the 1936 Wurlitzer jukebox. It was of particular interest to me since until recently I, in fact, owned and restored that very machine and I wondered whether your readers might be interested in knowing a little more about the jukebox featured and the device in general.

The machine in your photograph is a Wurlitzer model 412 which gave 12 78rpm selections and it is one of a handful of similar machines which were imported into this country from America shortly before restrictions were placed on the importation of non-essential goods with the advent of war in 1939.

When I acquired the model 412 in early 1977 it was in an appalling state, having spent some of its life outside. Most of the mahogany laminations were torn and hanging off and the intricate plywood fretwork speaker grill had sprung apart into many pieces. The whole machine had to be gutted and the junction box, coin and credit mechanism, lighting circuits and record changer completely rebuilt and rewired. The record changer mechanism itself is an ingenious system of cams, clutches, levers and ratchets. Records are contained in a stack of trays and when a selection has been made and a coin inserted, the appropriate record tray swings out over the turntable which slowly rises passing through the tray to take the record up to meet the pick-up arm which stands remote on a pedestal.

The jukebox, or 'automatic phonograph' as the makers preferred to call them were being made in America as early as the 1920's and between then and the arrival of the 45rpm record, the four main manufacturers of the device (AMI, Seeburg, Rockola and Wurlitzer) produced nearly 100 different designs of 78rpm jukebox. The late 30's and the 40's was reckoned to be the heyday of the device with fierce competition between the makers to produce the most eye-catching machines.

In the early years jukeboxes had tended to look like overgrown radio sets of the period, then in 1937 manufacturers began experimenting with moulded plastics and from this point jukebox styling really came into its own. Strictly speaking the term 'light up' as stated in your June caption really applied to these later machines in which the whole facade was a blend of polished wood, intricate chrome castings and coloured moulded plastic panels behind which were placed revolving coloured tubes and lights.

Strangely, although the 'radio set' designs are earlier (and probably fewer) it is these later 'light up' machines which are most sought by collectors and which bring the highest prices at auction.

Enclosed is a picture of myself with my latest machine, the classic Wurlitzer model 1015 made in 1946 and giving 24 78rpm selections. Flash photography just cannot do the machine justice as in subdued light the whole thing and its surrounding area becomes aglow with constantly changing colours.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Taylor

Where to meet fellow-members and collectors

There are now several branches scattered around the United Kingdom and most members could possibly attend one or other of the branch meetings by travelling a maximum of fifty miles or so. Below is a list of all the meeting places and branches. If there is not one close to you why not form another by advertising for other collectors in your local paper? You will get maximum support from the Officers of the Society.

Chilterns Branch: Secretary S. Jellyman, [REDACTED] Bourne End, Bucks.

There are meetings at intervals of about eight weeks, on Sundays from 2.30 – 6 pm at member's houses. Visitors usually take a machine or something else of interest with them. The meetings are very informal affairs with no fixed programme.

East Fife: Secretary E. Ferguson, [REDACTED] Kingskettle Fife.

This is a newly-formed branch whose first meeting was at the Pitscottie Inn in Cupar on October 24th. Meetings will probably be at about monthly intervals; check with the Secretary for details.

Hereford: Secretary D. G. Watson, [REDACTED] Tupsley, Hereford.

This branch meets about every six or eight weeks at either the British Oak or the Old Harp in Catherine Street, Hereford. The formula is similar to the Chilterns Branch, with a short recital slipped in.

Manchester: Secretary Ernest Wild, [REDACTED] Uppermill, Oldham, Lancs.

Monthly meetings on the first Wednesday at 7.30 pm at the Bay Horse, Thomas Street, Manchester 1. Members take turns to give a recital or talk which lasts about three-quarters of an hour: the remaining time is used to compare new finds, buy and sell records and chatter.

Merseyside: Secretary B. A. Williamson, [REDACTED] Liverpool L16 1LA.

Meetings are similar to those of the Chilterns Branch, with no fixed programme. Details from the Secretary.

South-East: Secretary C. Proudfoot, [REDACTED] Meopham, Gravesend, Kent.

Meetings at members' houses, usually with a short programme and long chatter. Normally on Friday evenings at approximately eight-week intervals. Write for details.

Midlands: Secretary P. Bennett, [REDACTED] Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, Staffs. WV4 5DE.

Meetings are bi-monthly at the Y.M.C.A. in Wolverhampton on Wednesday evenings at 8.00 pm. Usually a fixed programme by one member. A very active and popular branch which has now been running for ten years.

Tyne & Wear Clockwork Music Group: Organiser Phil Bailey, [REDACTED] Whickham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Co. Duham.

Not strictly a branch of the Society, in that it caters for collectors of musical boxes as well as talking machines. Details from the organiser.

London: Secretary J. McKeown, [REDACTED], London SW1.

The Society's main meetings are held once a month. The programmes being for the most part announced for the following year at the A.G.M. in October. Dates are normally the first Wednesday, but the first Saturday in August, September and October. The meeting-places are very comfortable, and quite suitable for inviting guests.

Please try and get to the next meeting near you; you will certainly enjoy it.

D. R. Roberts, Vice-Chairman

Who invented the Talking Machine?

(A review of past correspondence and articles on the origins of the talking machine, annotated and presented by Frank Andrews.)

My first correspondent's letter from "Veritas", was published in the October 1906 issue of "The Talking Machine News", and sparked off a continuing correspondence published in subsequent issues.

Veritas's question was an unfortunate one, for it presupposed that there was but one inventor of the talking machine. If the question had been "Who first invented a talking machine?" or "Who first constructed a talking machine?" the answers would have been simpler, but then we would not be left with the written interesting viewpoints from a number of those who had been concerned with the talking machine since 1888.

"Veritas" opened his letter; "Dear Sir, — The time appears to me to be ripe to raise the question as to who really was the inventor of the talking machine. I am aware that popular tradition assigns it, as it does many other notable inventions, to Thomas Alva Edison. "... but now that the talking machine is no longer in its infancy, it seems to me high time to ascertain to whom credit is due, i.e. to 'Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's' so far as the talking machine is concerned. For myself, I have the profoundest contempt for popular tradition and the "counting of heads" ... What are the actual facts of the case? That long antecedent to Edison's association with the talking machine, experiments in the direction of recording sound waves had been made and that they had been attended with complete success. I am fully aware that recording and reproducing sound-waves are two different matters. But we are able to go further than that and to state, on unimpeachable authority, that the reproduction of sound in the method of the talking machine, was known in France contemporaneously, if not antecedently, to the Edison Boom".

"Veritas" then went on to "put his foot in it" by mistakenly saying:—

"Similarly, in the United States, Emil Berliner had discovered how to engrave and reproduce sound, in the method which gave rise to the disc record of today".

"Veritas" was wrong on two counts there. Firstly Berliner's disc records were not in existence until ten years after the Edison and French inventions and, secondly, the "discs of today", in 1906, were made from masters taken by the Bells and Tainter invention of October 1881. (But it was still Berliner's method which gave rise to the disc record as such — Ed.)

"Veritas" then returned to Edison, and the tin foil phonograph constructed by Kreusi, throwing doubt on to whether it was Edison or Kreusi who actually invented the machine itself, however; "It was a mechanical toy of the possibilities of which even the inventors had no conception ... the possibilities of the machine were discovered by a newspaper man in one of the great American cities where a lecture had been delivered on the Edison toy. The machine, by common consent, was neither practicable for commercial and correspondence purposes — the first conception of those who were exploiting it — nor for amusement purposes. It was a toy, and a toy it would have remained but for the discovery of Bell and Tainter of the wax cylinder on which, I believe, the Edison Company still pay royalties to the owners of the patent in it."

Again, "Veritas's" anti-Edison passion had led him to state something which was untrue, as a little checking on his part would have revealed that, by 1906, the patents had expired!

It was noticeable that the letter from "Veritas", as published, although denying Edison as the inventor of the talking machine, did not say who it was!

The editor remarked "... but there are always two sides to a question, and we should be glad to hear from any correspondents on the other side."

The first to pick up the gauntlet was our old friend Henry Seymour, a well-known devotee of the phonograph, an inventor, an experimenter, a manufacturer of things phonographic, a contributor of articles and a writer of books. His Seymour Reproducers, of various types, were respected for over a quarter of a century. His long letter was published in the first November issue of "The Talking Machine News" for 1906.

Seymour remarked upon the legend that Edison came to invent his talking machine through the pricking of his finger with some telephonic apparatus, but there was no discovery in this as it had been well-known for many years that "certain sonorous vibrations imparted a certain force which could be exerted and registered on any suitable medium . . ." Mr. Edison appears to have first accomplished the fact of reproduction by means of a new method of recording viz. the indenting of tin-foil. I am aware that this claim has been disputed on behalf of a Frenchman, Chas. du Cros, and there seems some ground for dispute. Of course, nobody pretends that Mr. Edison invented the talking machine of the present day. That is a product of many minds."

Seymour was seen to be taking a "middle of the road" position on the subject, but he too had some doubts about Kreusi's role in the invention, for he said:—

"We all know that Kreusi made the first Edison machine, but he is dead, and we do not know precisely whether the conception, as a whole, was his or whether he merely collaborated with Mr. Edison in its construction."

Seymour wrote this less than thirty years after the event, and it is remarkable that such a knowledgeable man as he did not know the precise importance of Kreusi in the invention of the first phonograph.

Seymour continued — "Heaven knows, it was clumsy enough; and coming, as it did, after the period of the telephone, there was not much ingenuity about it. It was just the sort of thing an enlightened man would cast aside with a certain measure of contempt. And it is due to the credit of Mr. Edison that he did so regard it, until others took it up and improved it".

Seymour's description of Edison holding his machine in contempt was backed up last year, by Professor Ray Wile, in his paper read at the Edinburgh Centenary Symposium, in which he described the machine lying dust-covered and neglected in the Edison Laboratories, where Edison pointed it out, when asked by a visitor, how the phonograph was progressing!

"The others" who took it up and improved it were, of course, the Bells and C.S. Tainter.

"Whether Edison invented the tin-foil phonograph, or not", (Seymour had his doubts?), "it is certain that he has done a good share towards bringing the modern (1906) machine up to its present mark. He is not an originator by temperament but he has the faculty of application, writ large. We do not know — at least I do not — who originated the wax or soap blank for recording, but we do know that Mr. Edison did not, although he was not behind in improving its first form."

Mr. Seymour could not know who had invented the first form of wax cylinder, for that had been kept secret for many years and was still a secret at the time these letters were written!

"The adoption of this material was the starting point in the successful career of the talking machine."

Mr. Seymour here only gave half the reason. Edison had used wax, on paper and as a backing for his tin foil. It was not the use of wax itself, it was what was done with it, viz, the cutting of it to make a sound recording. Edison had only indented it!

Mr. Seymour's letter then went on to cover later developments, and Edison's part in some of them.

"We know that the Columbia Company produced the first moulded record, which was another great advance. But here again, Mr. Edison was quick to "go one better" in introducing the vacuum process of matrix making, which he claimed as his own invention. This claim is not well-founded, however, for the process was patented by Mr. Fawcett years before. Mr. Edison applied the process to records merely."

Seymour ended with reference to Daniel Higham's loud-speaking friction diaphragm which was the idea of a Mr. Cooper, as early as 1882.

In the second November issue of "The Talking Machine News" of 1906, "A.L." of Blackpool entered the fray. I, personally, have little doubt that "A.L." was Alfred Lomax, one of the first dealers in the gramophone, circa 1890, and an exhibitor and dealer in Edison phonographs, of the North American Phonograph Company, which business was brought to a halt by the Edison Bell Phonograph Corporation Ltd. on the grounds of infringement of their Edison and Bell & Tainter patents, Lomax being un-licensed by them. Lomax was also the official agent for one of the North American Phonograph Company's subsidiary's which produced entertainment cylinder recordings. He later became Branch Manager for the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd., at Manchester, after all the patents had expired.

"A.L." opened by saying it was necessary to know what "Veritas" implied by his question, "Did Edison invent the talking machine?", and then confused the question by saying that he would use the word phono-

graph to signify the talking machine, proceeding to mention Cros and his invention, (although never called his invention a phonograph). However, Lomax made the point that a talking machine did not talk, that is, it did not "utter" speech, but only re-produced it. This, for him, was the key to the answer.

"How to reproduce speech was the mystery of the ages but now, of course solved", "A.L." wrote, and described Chas. Cros' sealed package of April 30th 1877, and then the construction of the phonograph before Cros' paper was read in public session, on December 3rd 1877.

Wrote "A.L." — "The above and remarkable paper by M. Cros had as its heading, 'Process of Recording and Reproducing Audible Phenomena'. We therefore see at once, in this connection, that the question uppermost in the mind of M. Cros was speech reproduction. Why was this, and at this time?"

"The fact is that when the Bell telephone came its importance was not so much in reference to the great distance it was capable of conveying speech, but that so simple a piece of apparatus could give such excellent results and that, however thick the diaphragm, it could be made to set up audible vibrations. The result of this lesson on the scientific mind of M. Cros soon made itself apparent and he formulated a chain of reasoning as clever as it was astonishing."

There was no bowing down and worshipping at the feet of Edison with "A.L."!

"This he committed to writing . . . And of what did this consist? It was the explanation of a method whereby a tracing of recorded speech might, by a well-known process, be rendered permanent by being duplicated on to a hard surface. Then for a point, attached to a diaphragm, to pass along the duplicated lines at the same speed as when the speech record was made. The above to be on a disc or cylinder, by preference the latter."

If we stop there, the answer to the question "Did Edison invent the Talking Machine" appears to have been answered in the negative, as Cros' date of April 30th 1877, pre-dates any experiments of Edison with relation to his eventual tin-foil phonograph. But, in spite of Cros' efforts, he failed to find anyone willing to build apparatus putting his ideas into an experimental demonstrating stage, and the best that can be said for Cros is that he did invent *a* talking machine, but not *the* talking machine; as "A.L." rightly remarked —

"it is very clear that in the above is to be found the talking machine. The principle of the Phonograph is undoubtedly there, and on this point, M. Cros clearly may claim priority to Edison. To put the matter in another way, to M. Chas. Cros belongs the honour of having first suggested the idea and feasible plan for mechanically reproducing speech once uttered."

"A.L." then wrote of the lack of any further progress in Cros' ideas, at the time, and said there was some doubt that a successful machine could have been built if Cros' "process of construction" had been strictly followed. He then posed the following interesting question.

"Did M. Cros realize the vast importance of his own reasoning, its far-reaching extent, and what would be the actual effect and result with a machine that carried it out? In other words, what would happen? It would seem to me that he did not. That the machine would "talk", (using the term in its general sense), I rather think it possible he did not at all contemplate. But let not this militate against the value of the work of Cros — he gave the world a push-up in knowledge."

"What then was the practical value of his work? He proved, in a new way, by his method of reasoning, that a diaphragm would vibrate in an exactly similar manner in reproducing speech as it previously did when the same speech was recorded. And he also showed how recorded speech could be permanently secured by being permanently reproduced and transmitted . . . In fact M. Cros discovered the phonograph probably without knowing that he did."

"When the reproducer passes along the record we *now* know *what* happens, but without such knowledge who among us would even *guess* *what would happen under such circumstances?*" (My emphasis — F.A.).

"Even supposing we were able to say that the record would give back to the diaphragm the same kind of vibrations, it would not be surmising that we would hear actual speech. To mentally rise to such a conclusion is not, and has not been, so easy as some might be tempted to suppose. Why the phonograph talks remains even yet a mystery."

"Edison, also in this matter, does not appear to have been in better case than M. Cros."

"It might really be said that the telephone discovered the phonograph . . . Indeed, the actual phonograph discovered itself. Usually the telephone and the phonograph are not thought of at one and the same time, yet never in their principles and relationships were two separate instruments so closely related as are these two. For his own reputation it is a pity Cros confined himself to theorizing" . . . (That was not so, Cros was keen to see his ideas put into tangible form but could prevail on no one to co-operate with him. — F.A.)

"A.L." then remarked on Seymour's letter, — "I would rather say that however imperfect, clumsy or even in a sense, amusing — it (Edison's machine) solved one of the greatest riddles of the time. Yea, could it have

only spoken a few imperfect but articulate words, it would have remained a wonder of the first rank – and it was the potency and the hope of which the beautiful types of today are the realization.”

So “A.L.” considered Cros the first inventor of a talking machine, but Edison the first constructor of another type of talking machine.

My next letter was from J. Young. Young joined Colonel Gouraud’s Edison Phonograph Company of London in 1887, but Gouraud did not receive one of the new Perfected Phonographs until the end of the year. Gouraud and Young were the Edison Phonograph Company, at first. Young later got out a booklet on Edison and his Phonograph. With the founding of the Edison Bell Phonograph Corporation Ltd., Young was out on a limb. He founded the Edison Phonograph Company of Fore Street, E. C., was friendly with “A.L.” and, like him, was put out of business by Edison Bell, being un-licensed and being an infringer of the Edison and Bell & Tainter patents. He had businesses in Holland and France, his French business becoming the basis of the Pathe Freres business. He preclaimed a number of phonographic inventions attributed to Edison. He had a number of London-based businesses during his career, eventually associated with the disc trade before his retirement in the post-Great War period. From 1888 to 1891 he was the Manager of Gouraud’s Edison Phonograph Company, and the succeeding Edison United Phonograph Company. He was essentially a pro-Edison man; only in later years did he become slightly embittered and critical of Edison.

His letter of December 1906 opened; “Sir – The memory of man is very short, and generations come and go and old truths come up as new, and new ones are scotched and nailed on the marks made by the old ones. But to ask the question “Did Edison Invent the Talking Machine?” is, to my mind, absolutely absurd.”

“If you asked such men as Sir William Preece, Mr. Stroh, and many other scientists who are now alive, “Who invented the talking machine?”, they would very quickly answer, as I do, Thomas Alva Edison.”

“Not only did Edison invent the talking machine in 1877, but in his patent No. 1644 of 1878, he foreshadowed and claimed nearly every conceivable thing that has been done in connection with talkers.”

Mr. Young then lets his enthusiasm run away with him, having already made up his mind that Cros’s ideas were not worth the paper they were written on!

“Who invented the disc Machine? Berliner? Not a bit of it. Edison! See patent 1644 and Count Du Moncel’s book on the Telephone, published in 1880.

“Who first used wax? Tainter? No, Edison. See patent 1644 where he says he finds “the wax clogs the stylus” and thus he prefers to cover it with tin foil. Could he clog his stylus without cutting, gouging or removing the wax?”

Mr. Young, on this latter point was being very specious, for in spite of the comprehensive claims of Edison’s British patent, the cutting into wax was not one of them, and the fact that Edison covered his wax with tin foil because the indentations were removing the wax and spoiling the recording as a consequence, worked against Young’s argument that Edison invented wax cutting, rather than argued for the proposition.

Dealing with Cros, Young wrote, in contract to “A.L.” in the previous month –

“As for Du Cros. He never did anything. One might just as well say that Leon Scott invented the talking machine because he made records of sound on carbonized paper” – which, I submit, was no argument in the matter of Cros’ invention, but Young was one of those who, at that time, would not hear a word said against his hero.

Dealing with Kreusi, he wrote – And as for Kreusi, Edison’s workman, is it not all stuff to suggest that he invented anything? I knew him and he claimed that he never did anything but carried out Edison’s ideas.”

“There is no doubt that what Edison says is true, namely ‘I stumbled upon it’. But he was working in this direction in telephony. He wouldn’t have stumbled upon the thing if he had been grooming horses.”

“Edison did invent the Phonograph but, no doubt, his trouble was that he could not date it from 1886, as seems to be the trouble today by reason of the litigation by the Edison people in Germany . . .”

I will leave Mr. Young with the comment that the question was not “Did Edison invent the Phonograph?” but “Did he invent the talking machine?” and that if he chose to ignore Cros’ claim, he could only answer that Edison did!

The second December issue of “The Talking Machine News” of 1906, published the views of one Samuel Edward Slater, who jumped right into the deep end by firmly stating that the earliest talking machine invented was Mr. Edison’s tin foil phonograph. Turning to Cros, he wrote – “Whatever the French savant may have written, his was theoretical speculation only, Edison made the actual working model, and it actually reproduced the living voice.”

From which statement one might well think that Slater was saying that Edison built the machine that Cros had been theorising about, but maybe Slater never intended that conclusion to be drawn. And Cros’ ideas were more than a theoretical explanation, they were written out instructions for a disc machine to

record and reproduce sounds, and a patent was taken out on his method the following year.

But having claimed Edison as *the* talking machine's inventor, Slater wrote with much less enthusiasm than had J. L. Young.

"But a great deal of credit is given to Edison which he does not deserve. What he did was to invent a very crude and imperfect recording and reproducing process which had not, and never has been made to have any practical value. When it was announced that a machine had been devised which would reproduce human speech, the world was thunderstruck. Edison himself has said that his invention attracted more public notice than any other he ever made. But what came of it? Edison realised its imperfections as much as anyone and tried hard to overcome them. He failed . . . the phonograph took a back seat and finally was set away on a shelf and — forgotten. For ten years — think how long that is — nothing was heard of it!"

Mr. Slater was not quite correct in stating that the tin foil phonograph lay forgotten for ten years. It dropped from the limelight in America two or three years after the first flush of euphoria had subsided, but in Britain, it was not only in the catalogues of the sole concessionaires, the London Stereoscopic & Photograph Coy, for many years, but there was a fair number of amateur constructions with the very early expiry of Edison's British patent, through non-payment of annual fees.

(In fact the Bells and Tainter patent was applied for seven years after Edison's and granted one year later. Mr. Slater had not done his home-work!) He continued —

"How does this affect the claim that Edison invented the talking machine? . . . Edison secured the right to use the Bell and Tainter patent under a license agreement after long and expensive efforts to defeat it in the courts. The company formed to exploit the new instrument manufactured under this licence made such extensive use of his name that the public learned to look upon the Edison phonograph as Edison's invention, whereas there would be no Edison phonograph as we know it today, (1906), except for Bell and Tainter's patent. The advertisements were drawn to get the most benefit possible from the use of the name "Edison".

After dismissing the claims that Edison was the originator of the Concert or Grand sized cylinder records and machines, that he was the originator of the gold moulded record, Slater finished with — "a few of the most important developments in the talking machine line that are not due to Mr. Edison's efforts. Edison did not invent the engraved sound record — the only process of record-making employed nowadays, and the only process *ever successfully* employed. Edison did not invent the simplified spring motor. Edison did not invent the Grand or Concert instrument — the one with a mandrel of extra large diameter. Edison did not invent the Gold-Moulded Record. Edison did not invent the Sound Magnifying Instrument."

I leave it for others to judge whether Slater was motivated by a desire that the facts should be known, or whether he was simply anti-Edison. At least he held that Edison was the inventor of *the* talking machine!

Henry Seymour was also back with his views in December 1906.

I have already mentioned a lack in Seymour's knowledge of the history of the talking machine and his letter of December was a further admission in that direction. This time he was more concerned with what J. Lewis Young had written in November and his letter is here given in its entirety.

"Sir — In his exceptionally interesting letter in last issue, Mr. J. Lewis Young does not clear up the question whether Edison originated the talking machine but, starting from 1878, he has furnished some remarkable information in support of the many claims put forward on Edison's behalf. My attention was no sooner drawn to the abandoned patent, 1644 of 1878, than I procured a copy and read it with great interest. And I must say that this is one of the most embracing specifications that I have ever read. There is very little improvement in the general principles of the phonograph as we know it today that was not foreshadowed and suggested in the specification. Yes the disc machine is there. Not only the disc, but its latest development — the Auxetophone."

"I do not find, however, any mention of the wax blank, which Mr. Lewis Young denied to Tainter. Mr. Edison merely used wax on a paper cylinder for the purpose of more effectively fastening the tin or other metallic foil."

"The electrolyte mould, or record matrix is embodied in the specification, and this is unfortunate, because Mr. Young himself has claimed, in your columns, to be the inventor of the moulded process."

Seymour chose to ignore Cros' prior disc machine specification.

"A.L." of Blackpool was also back with a very long letter which took up one whole page of double columns and one quarter of a column on another page. The burden of the early part of his letter, which is full of speculative interest, and is too long to quote extensively, was concerned with Edison and his attempt to record telephone messages, through which the phonograph revealed itself as a feasibility. Dealing with Edison's July 30th 1877 British patent in this matter "A.L." wrote — "... it is a curious thing if it be regarded as a real phonograph patent that nothing is said in it in reference to the registering or reproduction of

speech. True the phonographic principle is indicated in it, but had it really been then discovered it seems inconceivable that so important a matter would not have been specially and particularly referred to . . .”

Edison announced the phonograph in November 1877. In this case, it places the phonograph in reference to the July 30th 1877 patent, No.2909, out of time.”

“A.L.” then went on to observe that it was not known, supposing that recorded speech had been fixed, that the reproduced vibrations would at all prove to be replicas of the original vibrations. All sorts of possible results were feared and vibrative distortions, quite out of truth, prepared for.

“Even today, with all the knowledge of actual result . . . it remains a paramount astonishing thing that (say in the case of a band) every instrument, and every modification of the music itself, is found to be recorded in every way and manner as the original. Instead of a mixed up jumble, all is order harmony and accuracy. Surely theory alone, even of high degree, could never have ventured to predict such a result?”

Digressing to mention the finding of the planet Neptune, by the separate reasoning and calculation of an Englishman and a Frenchman, “A.L.” returned to his main subject; “And so with Cros in reference to the phonograph. By clear reasoning he gave us the phonograph, whether he realised or not that it was indeed the actual phonograph – his paper is so palpably correct on this point that it seems purposeless to withhold from him the honour of (to such extent) being first. That he did not construct a phonograph does not at this stage of the argument, matter.”

“Cros and Edison evidently worked unknown and independently of each other. Very quickly following came the Edison patent of 1877, some months before Edison announced the discovery of the phonograph. Here, in this case, is another remarkable thing. As with Cros in his paper, so with Edison in the above patent – the phonograph is there. But as with Cros, so with Edison, the phonograph was there without his knowing or realising it . . . Cros apparently did not proceed further, and Edison stumbled upon the final result by accident. We owe the actual, or practical, phonograph to Edison, but that he invented it is another matter.”

To be continued

*Wimborne
20.9.78*

Dear Friends of the C.L.P.G.S.,

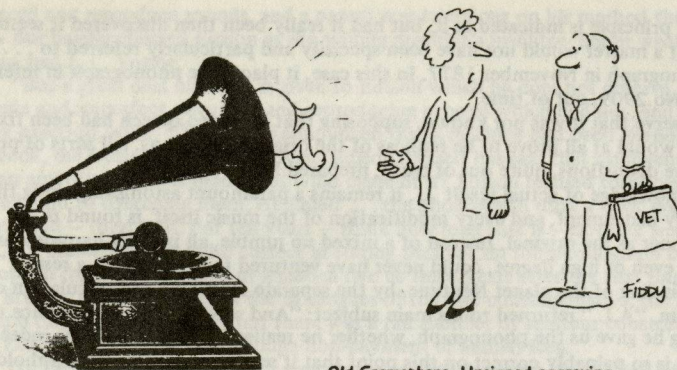
Thank you for the warm reception that you all gave me last Saturday. Speaking to you was the climax of a very pleasant two days in London, marred only by Peter Curry's sad illness; I'm sure we all offer our sincerest wishes for a speedy recovery. (We do indeed – Ed.)

Making phonograph records has been an interest I have had for about six years, but only in the latter part of this time have I managed to produce successful cylinders. Even these are really only partially successful, as the composition leaves much to be desired; the project goes on.

I hope to keep in touch with you all one way or another, and also to become a member of your Society soon, and when I have perfected my formula for cylindrical phonograph blanks and my method of pneumatic dubbing, and perhaps Concert cylinders, not to mention gold moulding and a whole host of other projects, perhaps you will see me again.

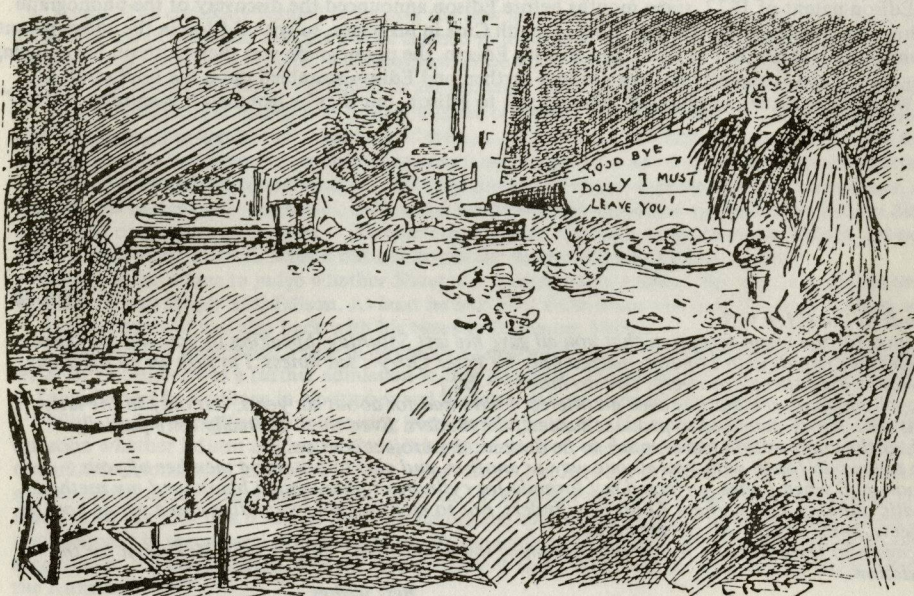
Thank again to Dave Roberts for his organisation of the whole event, and to John McKeown for the accommodation.

*Best wishes,
Paul Morris*



"It happened
when I played
his master's
voice"

Old Gramophone. Unsigned engraving.



Mabel. "We always do this when mater's out, uncle. Saves all the bother of talking. Ripping idea, isn't it?"

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